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ABSTRACT

A practicum report addressed the problem of lack of interest in the literacy of young readers and the need to motivate them to want to read. A cross-age peer-tutoring program was established where primary students were paired with upper intermediate grade students who displayed positive reading attitudes and habits. The tutoring pair worked together three times weekly (15 minutes each time) over the implementation period of 10 weeks. The final evaluation indicated a positive change in attitude in most beginning readers. The peer-tutoring program was implemented on a continuing basis. (Teachers' and parents' questionnaires, a letter to parents of primary students, the elementary reading attitude survey, the letter to parents of peer tutors, and a list of resource documents for the development of the peer tutoring program are attached.) (Author/RS)

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Improving the Reading Attitude of Early Primary Students Through Peer-Tutoring

by

Annette Boland-Willms

Cohort 43

A Practicum Report Presented to the National Master's Program for Child Care Administrators in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Masters of Science

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1991

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Sept 12/91
Date

A. Boland-Willa
Signature of Student

ABSTRACT

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This practicum addresses the problem of lack of interest in literacy of young readers and the need to motivate them to want to read. As in other areas of learning and development, it is felt that good models are essential in the development of positive attitudes.

A cross-age peer-tutoring program was established where primary students were paired with upper intermediate students who displayed the positive reading attitudes and habits which were the objectives of the program. The tutoring pair worked together three times weekly for fifteen minutes over the implementation period of ten weeks.

The final evaluation indicates a positive change in attitude in most beginning readers. The peer-tutoring program was implemented on a continuing basis. Appendices include sample reading attitude surveys and correspondence to parents.

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Cohort 43 Date September, 1991

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

School Setting

This dual-track French Immersion and English Program elementary school enrols children aged five to thirteen years, from Kindergarten (known as Primary one) to Grade seven. The enrolment at the time of the implementation of this practicum was three hundred and fifty-three. The majority of the school population is in Primary with two hundred and eight students registered in the Primary one to four levels.

The teaching staff of nineteen includes fifteen classroom teachers as well as a learning assistance teacher, a music teacher, a teacher-librarian and a part-time teacher for gifted children. With the exception of the music teacher and the librarian who are in their first year in the profession, the staff is experienced. Most of the teachers have fifteen or more years experience in the field. The administration comprises a full-time principal as well as a part-time vice-principal assignment.

The school was built in 1950. The one-story building is situated on the outskirts of town. The school's twelve classrooms cannot house all the

students so four portable classrooms are located on the grounds to supplement the space. A library, gymnasium and an administration office block complete the floor plan. Although forty years old, the building has been well maintained, has been freshly painted and is quite attractive.

Community Setting

The school is situated in a town of thirteen thousand in the Western Canadian province of British Columbia. It is located in the Fraser Valley. The demographic profile provided by the Ministry of Education of British Columbia for the school district reveals that the percentage of children under fifteen years of age is higher than the provincial average. Forty-nine percent of the adult population has not completed high school. The unemployment rate is sixteen percent. Manufacturing, construction and agriculture-related occupations are dominant.

The town is growing rapidly. Within the immediate vicinity of the school, two new housing developments will bring eighty new families into the neighbourhood within the next few months.

Although it is located within one hour's drive from a major metropolis, the atmosphere is one typical of the strong community bonds found in a small town.

The school has an active Parents' Advisory Committee which is dedicated to support the educational endeavours of the staff. In general, the parents value their children's education. This is reflected by the high attendance rate of 94.6 percent.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer is the full-time principal of this elementary school. This entails a full range of administrative duties: building management, staff hiring and supervision, financial responsibilities, public relations and more. However, the most important responsibility is that of providing educational leadership for the benefit of students.

The writer has been active in the field of early childhood education for two decades and was the primary education consultant for a provincial ministry of education in Canada. A second area of interest is that of second language acquisition and the French Immersion program in Canada.

It has become evident to the writer throughout her twenty-one year career in education that early acquisition of literacy is crucial to the child's educational success. Furthermore, the most determining factor in the successful acquisition of literacy is the

child's interest in reading and his/her motivation to become a reader. It is hoped that this report will present strategies to enhance young children's interest in learning to read.

Chapter 2

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Situation

The total enrolment in the primary program is two hundred and eight. One hundred and six children are enrolled in the regular English program while the remainder are in the French Immersion program. Only the children in the English program were involved in this practicum project. Pupils in the French Immersion program learn to read in French first and English is only introduced at the Year four level. Furthermore, at this time, the French Immersion program was from Year one to Grade four only. The program advances yearly as the group of oldest students moves from one level to the next. They were not considered as peer tutors as it was felt that in general their own English reading skills are still developing. As well, they did not have the necessary maturity to make the value judgements needed.

The configuration of the primary classrooms was as follows:

	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4
Mrs. G	20			
Mrs. A		11	8	
Mrs. D		11	8	
Mrs. S			6	18
Mrs. K			6	18

Year one (Kindergarten) is a half-day program. It is a language rich environment where the teacher integrates literature into many of the varied activities available to the pupils. Reading is more formally introduced in Year two. The reading program throughout the primary is based on a Whole-language approach. Authentic children's literature is used by the teachers to initiate the students to literacy.

Students learn to read with varying degrees of success. This is not a new situation but one which has existed for many generations. However, the emphasis of education has become more individualized and it is expected that all children have the right to be successful. It is therefore not enough for the teacher or the school to provide a "good program" to those who can avail themselves of it. Rather, the onus is on the educators to structure programming in such a way that all children are able to reach their potential. This requires more individualized planning and programming. Although teachers recognize the benefits of giving individualized attention to each child, the reality of having twenty to twenty-five students makes it difficult to find the time to do this consistently and with enough frequency.

In the past, reading was regarded as purely intellectual and had been taught as a stimulus-response activity. This is particularly true of the phonetic

approach. Furthermore, the concept of "reading readiness" made it an all or nothing endeavour. However, it appears more evident that reading is also an affective activity and that the acquisition of literacy begins very early in life. It was often thought that some children were not interested in reading because they were poor readers. Although that may hold some truth, it is the writer's opinion that the converse is probably more so the case, particularly at the primary level. Some children are having difficulty learning to read because they have not yet developed an interest in reading.

Documentation of the Problem

When the Year two to four teachers were interviewed about the reading progress of their pupils, all revealed that some of their students were not showing much interest in reading. Each teacher was asked to identify three students who were in that situation.

The next step was to gather information about these children so as to be able to document their reading behaviour. This information was beneficial in understanding the situation and was instrumental in developing the program. Information was gathered from three sources, the teachers, the parents,

and the children themselves. In each case, a questionnaire was used. The writer purposely kept the teacher and parent questionnaires short and to the point so as to ellicit maximum response and not to overburden otherwise busy staff members.

The teachers were asked to reflect on the children's attitudes towards reading and behaviours while reading. The teachers' observation notes and anecdotal reports were used. In addition, data from the child's individual reading records and from the home-reading "book bag" program were used. A copy of the questionnaire is attached (Appendix A).

The parents were queried about their children's reading habits at home. An attempt was made at assessing the importance of literacy in the home (Appendix B).

The children selected for the program were given the "Elementary Reading Attitude Survey" developed by McKenna and Kear (Appendix C).

Furthermore, interviews were informally conducted with staff members and colleagues in the field of education.

Analysis of the Problem

Learning to read is a complex task. Current research reveals that it is not simply an intellectual process. Rather, the child's motivation or interest in

reading is very influencial as well and is a crucial part of becoming literate.

The parents' and teachers' questionnaire revealed that the young students selected for the peer-tutoring program were unmotivated or displayed little interest in independent reading. On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= always and 4=rarely), the children rarely chose reading as a voluntary activity (average score of 3.Ø) and rarely spoke about books or stories (3.Ø8). However, they seemed to show interest when being read to, particularly individually (1.33). In approximately two-thirds of the cases, the child's reading level was described as "average". Therefore, most of these children had the ability to read; they were simply not choosing to do so. This was evident when one compared the average of 2 books taken home as part of the "home-reading" program to the possible of approximately 2Ø if a book is taken home daily.

In nearly fifty percent of the cases, the teacher speculated that the child's family environment was not conducive to the development of good reading habits. The Parents' Reading Attitude Survey confirmed that the reading patterns seen by the teacher in class were generally similar to those in the home. Most children

rarely chose reading as a pastime activity (3.81) or talked about books or stories (3.73). Yet, slightly over 70 % of parents reported that their child liked being read to. The family environment was generally not a literacy rich one. In most homes, reading was only occasionally or rarely chosen as a pastime by other family members (2.60). Books were not chosen as gift items for children and although all children owned some books, the average number of books per household was under 20. Only one child owned a public library card and visited it on a monthly basis.

The Elementary Reading Attitudes Survey was administered to every child. Although the results of the survey were kept in the child's individual file, the average of their responses was calculated. Given that their academic placement was either Year 2 or Year 3, the range of their percentile scores is given. The recreational reading attitude was low with a percentile score of 12 to 15 while the academic reading attitude was in the low average range at 39 to 46. Overall, the children ranked at the 22 to 29th percentile.

The analysis of these results indicated that the children did not dislike reading when it was presented to them. This was particularly the case on an individual basis. However, they did not choose reading as an independent activity. They appeared to be

lacking reading models in the home and modeled their parents' habits and attitudes in this area. It was suspected that many of them do not know how to choose books which would interest them but which were also at an appropriate reading level.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Although most recent research in reading has emphasized comprehension rather than attitude, the recognition that motivation is a crucial factor in the attainment of literacy is not a novel topic. In 1957, Ruth Strickland stated that a reader "...is not a person who can read; he is a person who does read." Dechant and Smith (1977: 112) elaborated on this point in with this statement,

> If the child is to learn to read, his interest somehow must be captured. And further, his interest must be retained. He must continue to read.

Literature continues to recognize the importance of attitude in the acquisition of literacy. Smith (1988: 177) stated that "the emotional response to reading...is the primary reason most readers read, and probably the primary reason most nonreaders do not read". Wixson and Lipson, as cited by McKenna and Kear (1990: 626), acknowledge that "the student's attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance".

The recognition of the importance of motivation in learning to read brings an even more important question to the minds of educators. How does a child become motivated to read?

It is the writer's belief that the acquisition of literacy proceeds naturally in a supportive environment. Schickedanz (1986: 240) states that in order for parents and teachers to "make room for literacy learning," they have "to give it a playful, interesting, useful and joyous place in all children's lives". David Elkind (1987: 10) cites five concerns of the Early Childhood Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association regarding early reading acquisition. Two of them deal with the possible causes of lack of motivation for reading. First, abstract reading skills are overemphasized too early. Second, "too little attention is placed upon reading for pleasure". It is therefore not surprising that children do not associate reading with enjoyment. Margaret Meek (1982: 16-19) stresses that too much emphasis is placed on the usefulness of literacy and on the process of learning to read and write. When she queried habitual readers as to what reading is for, they replied that "it is a special kind of pleasure".

Developing a love of books in young children is the first step in children's progress towards gaining

access to the printed word (Doake, 1988: 24). Like most other skills and attitudes, children learn those by modeling the behaviours of parents and other significant people. David Doake (1988: 77) pointedly asks the following question, "How can we expect children to want to learn to read if they have seldom seen reading used in pleasurable ways, or if they never participate in the activity?"

The same author makes the following statement,

> In literate societies, the most disempowered people are the illiterates, those who cannot read at all and those who turn away from print in frustration.

Educators have the responsibility of teaching reading skills, but more importantly, they have the duty of developing the attitudes that will enable children to be literate in every sense of the word. Programs should reflect this priority.

Chapter 3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Statement of Goals

The following goals were projected for this practicum:

1. Over a period of ten weeks, the students will show more interest in independent reading as evidenced by an increase of at least ten percentile points in the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.
2. The parents and teachers will report that the children show a more positive attitude towards independent reading as evidenced by the parents' and teachers' questionnaire as well as by regular observations

Method of Evaluation

Goal number one was evaluated as follows:

As part of the documentation process of the problem, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was administered to all primary students involved in this practicum. These results were used as pre-test data. At the end of the practicum implementation period, the same test was administered again as a post-test.

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey was selected because it assesses both independent reading

attitude as well as adademic reading attitude. Furthermore, it is visually appealing to young children and easily administered and scored.

Goal number two was evaluated as follows:

The parents were asked to fill out the Reading Attitude Survey - Parents' Questionnaire as part of the documentation process. They were asked to comment on their child's reading attitudes by filling out a questionnaire at the end of the practicum period. Furthermore, they were asked to take note of any relevant events pertaining to the child's interest in reading during the ten week period.

The teachers were asked to answer the Reading Attitude Survey - Teachers' Questionnaire as part of the documentation process. It had been planned to ask them to fill out a second questionnaire at the end of the practium period. However, due to job action related to labour unrests at the time, that evaluation was not used. The teachers were asked to make regular anecdotal notes pertaining to the child's attitude towards reading. Both the parents'and the teachers' questionnaires were devised by the writer. They provided the pertinent information which the writer required to generate a profile of the reading attitudes of the young readers involved. The information was

supplemented by frequent conversations with the teachers.

The whole practicum was followed closely by the writer during daily observation of the peer-tutoring process. Informal feedback was obtained on a regular basis from both the tutors and their young reading partners. Relevant anecdotes were noted and used in the final evaluation of the program.

Chapter 4

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Professional literature abounds with research and statements about the role of parents in the development of positive attitudes towards learning in general and reading in particular. It seems that much needs to be done in the home prior to the child's entry into the public school system. Margaret Meek (1982: 26) defines the parents' role as follows,

> ...it is to encourage the child to believe that reading is a worthwhile and pleasureable thing to do, that literacy is within his grasp, and to provide the means for his enjoyment and success.

In order to do this, the parents must be good models of literacy themselves. The children should see them reading for purpose as well as for pleasure. Reading must be a part of the daily life of the family from birth onward (Doake, 1988: 77).

The Missouri Parents as Teachers (PAT) program provides a good model for the implementation of parent involvement in the education of their children (Winter & Rouse, 1990: 383). This program gives training and support to parents so that they may provide an

environment conducive to the development of positive attitudes towards learning.

Of course, an early immersion into the literary world would probably prevent many of the students' attitude problems towards reading. Likewise, if parents were to be helped in providing a more supportive home environment, the children's attitudes would probably improve. Although this solution may be explored at a later date, for the the sake of this practicum, the writer was searching for a solution which could be implemented within the school.

Another solution which is explored by several authors is that of changing the timing and emphasis of formal reading instruction in the school. They claim that, like many other skills, the acquisition of literacy is developmental. Furthermore, it is believed that if a child is pushed beyond his maturational level, he will develop negative attitudes towards reading (Dechant & Smith, 1977: 179; Elkind, 1987: 10). Dechant and Smith state, "He actually learns not to read".

A Whole Language literacy program is presently used at this school and the developmental level of children is highly respected. No child is pushed to do something he/she is not ready for. Thus, this strategy

is already being used in the school.

A third solution involves the pairing of younger children with slightly older peers within the school in a tutoring situation. This approach has received much attention in literature. In its Research About Teaching and Learning, the U.S. Department of Education (1986: 36) states that "students tutoring other students can lead to improved academic achievement for both the student and the tutor, and to positive attitudes towards coursework". An extensive peer-tutoring project was conducted in the Boise Public Schools. Plumb and Wilkinson (1974) concluded that

> ...cross-age tutors who have been trained...can become an important and inexpensive adjunct to regular classroom instruction in developing cognitive skills and a positive attitude toward reading in primary grade children.

There is evidence that the social interaction between the tutor and the student is a determining factor in the development of positive attitudes towards reading as a result of a peer-tutoring program (Boraks, 1977). It seems that many tutors "develop strong friendships with their students" (Weiss & al, 1988). That social-emotional bond encourages the younger child to emulate the behaviours and attitudes of the older tutor.

The peer-turoring solution was selected in this situation as it was one which could be implemented within the school setting. This allowed for close monitoring by the writer throughout the implementation process. Furthermore, due to budget restrictions, a practical as well as low-cost solution was desireable. Assuming a successful program, it was the writer's hope that this practicum would provide a model for the implementation of a larger scale peer-tutoring program in the next school year.

Description of Selected Solution

Student Selection:

The primary students were nominated by their teachers for participation in this program on the basis of their observed negative attitude towards independent reading. Each student's reading attitude was evaluated by the teacher, the parents and the writer. Parental approval was secured for participation in the program (Appendix B).

Tutor Selection:

Grade six and seven students were nominated by their teachers. The criteria for selection was the student's positive attitude and enthusiasm for reading as an independent actitivity. Furthermore, demonstrated qualities of reliability and congeniality

with younger children were sought.

The program was thoroughly explained to the nominated students. If interested in becoming a peer-tutor, the students were asked to discuss this with their parents and received an explanatory letter as well as a permission slip to be returned to the school (Appendix D).

Peer-tutoring Program:

The students and tutors worked together three times per week for fifteen minutes each time over a period of ten weeks. The scheduling of this activity was planned so that it occurred during silent reading time within the classroom. This was done so that the regular schedule was not interrupted and so that the primary students did not feel singled out or deprived of other classroom activities.

The tutor was responsible for meeting his assigned primary student in the classroom. The pair then proceeded to the library where they chose a book together. The book selection time had to be kept short so that there was ample time left for reading. It had been thought that the pairs would then work together in the library, but many opted to take the library cushions elsewhere in the school and find a quiet and private space to share their reading. Thus, students

were often found in the foyer, the hallways, or the office.

The book was read by either the tutor or the primary student and then discussed. The tutors were trained to use various pair reading techniques. As well, they were given guidance as to what types of questioning would lead to greater comprehension of the story by the beginning reader. Tutor training is discussed in greater depth in a subsequent section of this report.

The progress of the program was monitored by obtaining feedback from the tutors, by regular examination of the tutors' diaries, by direct observation and record keeping by the writer. This ensured that the program was being implemented according to plan and allowed for changes or corrections when necessary. A final evaluation of the program was conducted as per the process described in Chapter 3.

Tutor Training:

The writer provided training for the tutors prior to the commencement of the tutoring program. The tutors also met every two weeks and further training was provided during these meetings as well.

A quick overview of the development of reading

skills was presented by having the students reflect upon and discuss their own experiences and memories about learning to read. This proved to be enlightening as well as amusing for all the tutors. Considerable time was spent discussing how to develop rapport with the younger student. Although the writer had not anticipated this issue to be problematic for the tutors, it appreared that most of their apprehension rested in this area.

The tutors showed considerable insights about how to select books for and with younger children and most of the suggestions originated from them.

One or two strategies for pair reading were presented at each meeting, including taking turns at reading various sections of the story, echo-reading, using the quotations to alternate reading, stopping and letting the child "guess" the next word, predicting the outcome, interjecting a nonsense word. Strategies for shared reading are abundant in the literature. A list of resource documents is provided in Appendix F.

The tutors were asked to keep a daily diary of the session. This included the title of the book that was shared as well as the young student's reaction to it and his attitude towards reading that day. In a second implementation of this program, the writer would provide a form for the tutor and student to fill out

APPENDIX C

Letter to Parents of Primary Students

after each session. This would provide more accurate and uniform records. The same pictorial rating tool as that of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey could be used for this purpose with additional space for anecdotal comments by the tutor.

The regular follow-up sessions served to provide encouragement and support to the tutors. Twice during the implementation session, a social activity was organized to show appreciation for their work.

Time Schedule:

Week one	-Selection and training of tutors
Week two to Week five	-Begin peer-tutoring program -Meet tutors weekly to get feedback, give guidance and support
Week six	-Continue implementation -Mid-program evaluation -Additional training for tutors -Social activity for tutors
Week seven to Week nine	-Continue implementation and weekly meetings with tutors
Week ten	-Evaluation of program -Communicate results to parents and teachers -Social activity for peer-tutoring pairs to celebrate end of program

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Chapter 5

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The first goal of this practicum was to show an improvement in attitude towards independent reading as evidenced by an increase of at least ten percentile points in the Elementary Reading Survey (Recreational Reading section).

Table 1

Recreational Reading Scores

Question	Pretest	Post-test	Difference
1	1.82	1.42	-Ø.4Ø
2	2.98	3.42	Ø.44
3	1.5Ø	2.92	1.42
4	2.Ø7	2.ØØ	-Ø.Ø7
5	2.31	2.67	Ø.36
6	3.Ø2	3.72	Ø.7Ø
7	1.76	2.67	Ø.91
8	1.38	1.5Ø	Ø.12
9	2.87	2.5Ø	Ø.37
1Ø	3.21	3.75	Ø.54
Total	23.93	26.57	2.64
Percentile	12 - 15	24 - 28	12 - 13

The preceding table indicates the group average

score to individual questions in the Recreational Reading Survey as well as the percentile equivalent. The range of percentile is given as tutored students were from two different grade levels .

The Academic Reading Survey was administered as well. Only slight variations were noted between pretest and post-test results to individual questions. The percentile score remained the same over the implementation period.

The second goal was to have parents and teachers report a more positive attitude towards independent reading. In the second parent questionnaire sent at the conclusion of the program, parents did indeed report a positive change in attitude. On the average, children were choosing reading as a pastime more often. Their pretest score had been 3.81 (1=often and 4=never) while their post-test score was 2.58.

Similarly, children discussed books and reading much more frequently (pretest = 3.73, post-test = 1.75). Whereas ninety percent of the parents read to their child once a week or less prior to the program, the post-test survey indicated that at the request of the child, parents were now reading to their children on an average of twice per week. Eight of the twelve parents reported that their child had enjoyed the tutoring

program. Three of them had not discussed it with their child and one parent did not return the questionnaire.

Due to job action relating to labour unrest, the teacher questionnaire was not completed following the implementation. However, the "book-bags" showed that children were now taking an average of two books home per week, a dramatic increase from two per month prior to the program. Informal discussion with the teachers revealed that the students felt positive about the time spent with their tutors. This is supported by observations made by the writer and by the anecdotal records kept by the tutors.

Although it had not been the intent of this practicum to assess the effect that the tutoring program had on the tutors, the older students showed much enthusiasm and requested to be involved in further implementations. Their teachers declared that for many of them, the experience had had a positive effect on their self-concepts. Furthermore, the tutor and younger student were often seen together at other times than that prescribed by the writer.

Conclusions

A peer-tutoring program is a viable solution to the problem of improving the attitude of beginning readers towards reading. During the ten week duration

of this practicum, the primary students who took part in this project showed improvement as indicated by the increase of twelve to fourteen percentile points on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey. Although not a substantial improvement, the writer feels that it is significant, given the relative short duration of the program.

The temptation here is, of course, to conclude that if the program had been of longer duration, the noted improvement would have been even more dramatic. However, in its report on tutoring, What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning, the U. S. Department of Education (1986: 36) states that "a relatively short duration of instruction (a few weeks or months)" is one of the elements of an effective tutoring program. In order to prevent boredom or routine from setting in, the length of the program was probably adequate.

The tutoring program was held during the last three months of the school year. Although no formal follow-up was done when the students returned to class in September, random queries with some of the participants revealed that little pleasure reading was done during the holiday months. Thus, the children and perhaps their families as well, continued to view reading as a school related activity. The writer is of

the opinion that a similar program would be more beneficial if it were run earlier in the school year, perhaps in the fall or winter term. Although different test results would not be anticipated, it would be possible to establish a long term sustained follow-up system with these students. The tutoring pair could continue to meet regularly, but with decreasing frequency, until the primary student's attitudes towards independent reading have genuinely improved permanently.

The results of this practicum have raised two related questions which could be explored further in a subsequent implementation of the tutoring program. These relate to the benefit of the program on the tutors' self-concept and to the possible impact of the program on the reading habits of the primary students' families.

The strong impact of the family's reading habits on children's attitude as well as performance was noted by Doake in 1988. An added dimension to the tutoring program could be that of a more concentrated parental participation. It would be necessary to provide training and support to families so that they be actively involved and feel genuinely committed to supporting their youngster's efforts. The Missouri Parents as Teachers project (PAT) offers a valuable

model from which many activities and suggestions could be drawn (Winter & Rouse, 1990).

The effect of the program on the tutors themselves needs to be studied further. Much literature exists on the subject as well. Assuming that the positive effect on self-concept is verified, this could have implications on the selection of peer tutors. Students could be nominated to the program with two criteria in mind, the reading skills and attitudes which they could share with younger children as well as the potential benefit which they might derive themselves.

Recommendations

The writer makes three recommendations following this practicum.

1. The peer-tutoring program should be implemented early in the school year.

2. A program which would foster the maintenance of good reading habits should be implemented following the shorter but more intense tutoring program.

3. Family involvement should be fostered through a planned intervention program.

Follow-up and dissemination

It is the writer's intent to use the work done in this practicum as a model for the implementation of a larger scale peer-tutoring program at the school. The

results of this practicum implementation will enable the school to custom design the upcoming program to meet its specific needs and requirements.

This report will be available to other educators in the school district and the writer will make herself available to discuss the peer-tutoring program with interested parties.

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' Questionnaires

Reading Attitude Survey

Teacher's Questionnaire
(Pretest)

Teacher's name:_____ .

Student's name:_____

Please answer the following questions using the appropriate number response.

Scoring key:

nearly always 1 occasionally 2 rarely 3 never 4

1. Does the student choose reading as a voluntary activity? _____

2. Does the student show interest during large group story-time? _____

3. Does the student show interest when being read to individually? _____

4. Does the student talk about books or stories?_____ .

5. Does the student use avoidance techniques during reading time? _____ .

Please answer the following questions in a few words.

6. How would you describe this student's reading level ?

_____

7. If you have a home reading program, how many books does this student take home in a month (average)? _____

8. How would you describe this student's interest level in reading?_____

_____

9. If you feel that lack of motivation or interest for reading is a difficulty for this child, can you speculate on the reason(s)?

Reading Attitude Survey

Teacher's Questionnaire
(Post test)

Teacher's name:_____

Student's name:_____

Please answer the following questions using the appropriate number response.

Scoring key:

nearly always 1 occasionally 2 rarely 3 never 4

1. Does the student choose reading as a voluntary activity? _____

2. Does the student show interest during large group story-time? _____

3. Does the student show interest when being read to individually in class? _____

4. Does the student talk about books or stories?_____

5. Did the student show enthusiasm about the time spent with his tutor? _____

Please answer the following questions in a few words.

6. If you have a home reading program, how many books has this student taken home since the tutoring program started? _____

7. Please ralate any anecdotes or comments pertaining to this student and the tutoring program.

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APPENDIX B

Parents' Questionnaires

READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE
(Pretest)

Child's name: _____

Please answer the following questions using the appropriate number response.

Scoring key:

nearly always 1 occasionally 2 rarely 3 never 4

1. **Does your child choose reading as a passtime?** _____

2. **Do other people in your family choose reading as a passtime?** _____

3. **Does your child receive books as gifts?** _____

4. **Does your child talk about books or stories?** _____

5. **Are you concerned about your child's reading ability?** _____

Please answer the following questions in a few words.

6. Do you read to or with your child? _____.

   If yes, how often (daily, weekly, monthly)_____

   How old was your child when you first started reading to him/her? _____

   Does your child enjoy being read to? _____.

7. Does your child or family own children's books? _____

   If yes, approximately how many?_____.

8. Does your child have a public library card? _____

   If yes, how often does he/she go to the library? ___.

   _____

9. Please add other comments, information or concerns about reading on the back of this page.

READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE
(Post test)

Child's name: _____

Please answer the following questions using the appropriate number response.

Scoring key:

nearly always 1 occasionally 2 rarely 3 never 4

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PEER-TUTORING PROGRAM:

1. Does your child choose reading as a passtime? _____

2. Does your child talk about books or stories? _____

Please answer the following questions in a few words.

3. Do you read to or with your child? _____

   If yes, how many times per week? _____

4. Please relate any anecdotes or comments pertaining to your child's involvement in the peer-tutoring program.

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Dear Parents,

Learning to read is a complex task. Current research reveals that it is not only an intellectual process. Rather, the child's motivation or interest in reading is very influential as well and is a crucial part of becoming literate.

Developing a keen interest in reading requires good models and takes time. This is a priority in the primary classroom, especially with the Whole Language approach. However, some children seem to require extra time and attention.

To this effect, I would like to develop a peer-tutoring program at E. S. Richards. For this first time, the program would be concentrating on reading motivation. In the future, it could involve mathematics and other skills. A peer-tutor is a student in the intermediate grades who exhibits good skills and attitudes and who shows maturity and a sense of responsibility. He/she works on a one to one basis with a younger student. They will work together for three periods of fifteen minutes each week until the end of June. The peer-tutor receives special training before and throughout the program and works under the direction of myself and the teacher.

Your child's teacher has identified your son/daughter as a potential candidate for this program. This is an opportunity for your child to get individualized help.

If you are agreeable to having your child participate in this program, please fill out and return the enclosed questionnaire as your approval. If you do not wish your child to participate, it would be appreciated if you would indicate this in writing. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at school.

Thank-you for your co-operation in returning the questionnaire promptly.

yours truly,

Annette Boland-Willms
Principal

APPENDIX D

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

Designed by: Michael C. McKenna abd Dennis J. Kear

Published: The Reading Teacher (May 1990)
Volume 43 . No 9

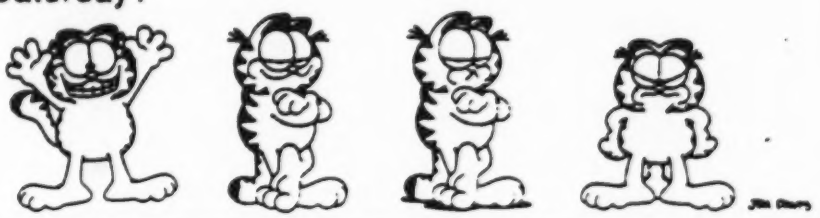
Note: This survey was placed into the public domain by means of the publication of the article cited above.

A sample sheet is reproduced in this appendix.

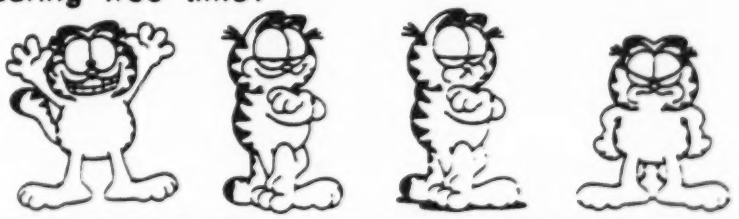
ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

School_____ Grade___ Name_____

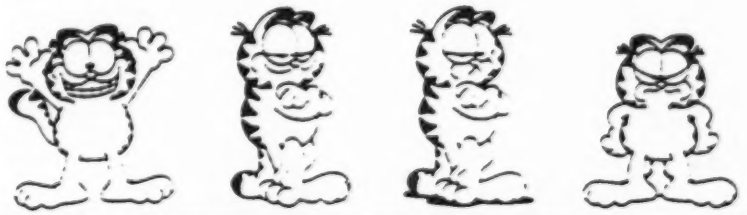
1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



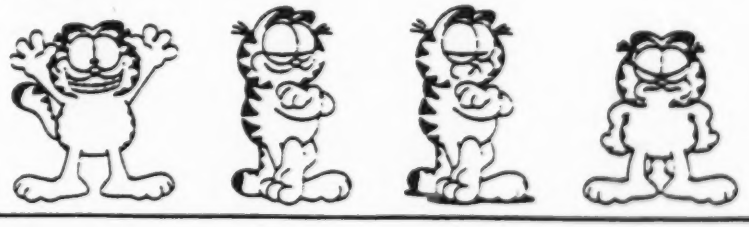
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?



APPENDIX E

Letter to Parents of Peer Tutors

Dear Parents,

Learning to read is a complex task. Current research reveals that it is not only an intellectual process. Rather, the child's motivation or interest in reading is very influencial as well and is a crucial part of becoming literate. Several young students need extra help in this area.

To this effect, I would like to develop a peer-tutoring program at E. S. Richards. A peer-tutor is a student in the intermediate grades who exhibits good skills and attitudes and who shows maturity and a sense of responsibility. He/she works on a one to one basis with a younger student. They will work together for three periods of fifteen minutes each week until the end of June. The peer-tutor receives special training before and throughout the program and works under the direction of myself and the teacher. It is rewarding for the tutor to see the younger child develop and learn.

Your child's teacher has nominated your son/daughter to become a peer tutor because he/she has a keen interest in reading and could provide a good model to a younger reader. Your son/daughter has indicated interest in becoming a peer-tutor following the introductory meeting.

Please fill out and return the enclosed permission slip. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at school. Thank-you for your co-operation in returning this promptly.

yours truly,

Annette Boland-Willms
Principal

PEER TUTORING PROGRAM

My son/daughter, _____, has my permission to be a peer tutor for the remainder of the 1990-91 school year.

_____
Parent's signature

APPENDIX F

Tutor Training Program

List of resource documents

TUTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Materials from the following sources were principally used for the training program.

1. "The New Read-Aloud Handbook" by Jim Tralease
2. "Active Learning" by The North York Board of Education
3. "Look Hear" by The North York Board of Education
4. "Tutors' Resource Handbook" by the U.S. Dept of Health, Education, and Welfare
5. "Increasing Sight Bocabulary in Grades 1, 2, and 3 Through Cross-Age Tutoring and Game Strategies" by Sally Levine